



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : B65H 1/00, A47K 10/24, B60R 11/00, 7/00	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 99/29602 (43) International Publication Date: 17 June 1999 (17.06.99)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US98/25946 (22) International Filing Date: 7 December 1998 (07.12.98) (30) Priority Data: 08/986,887 8 December 1997 (08.12.97) US (71) Applicant: FARSHEED, Marco [US/US]; P.O. Box 380035, Cambridge, MA 02238 (US). (72) Inventors: ZOMORODI, Ramin; 10350 Wilshire Boulevard #1203, W. Los Angeles, CA 90024 (US). COLLINS, George, Noah; 9403 Alcott Street, Los Angeles, CA 90035 (US). (74) Agent: LOWRIE, Matthew, B.; Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C., 600 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210 (US).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A TISSUE DISPENSER SHAPED TO FIT IN A CUPHOLDER (57) Abstract <p>A tissue container (10) shaped to be secured in a vehicle cupholder, and a method of dispensing tissues from the container (10). The tissue container (10) may be shaped like a beverage container, coffee cup, mug or soda can. The container (10) may include a removable top portion (18) permitting access to the tissues.</p> <div style="text-align: right;"> </div>		

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AL	Albania	ES	Spain	LS	Lesotho	SI	Slovenia
AM	Armenia	FI	Finland	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
AT	Austria	FR	France	LU	Luxembourg	SN	Senegal
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	LV	Latvia	SZ	Swaziland
AZ	Azerbaijan	GB	United Kingdom	MC	Monaco	TD	Chad
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	GE	Georgia	MD	Republic of Moldova	TG	Togo
BB	Barbados	GH	Ghana	MG	Madagascar	TJ	Tajikistan
BE	Belgium	GN	Guinea	MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	TM	Turkmenistan
BF	Burkina Faso	GR	Greece	ML	Mali	TR	Turkey
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	MN	Mongolia	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
BJ	Benin	IE	Ireland	MR	Mauritania	UA	Ukraine
BR	Brazil	IL	Israel	MW	Malawi	UG	Uganda
BY	Belarus	IS	Iceland	MX	Mexico	US	United States of America
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	NE	Niger	UZ	Uzbekistan
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	NL	Netherlands	VN	Viet Nam
CG	Congo	KE	Kenya	NO	Norway	YU	Yugoslavia
CH	Switzerland	KG	Kyrgyzstan	NZ	New Zealand	ZW	Zimbabwe
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	PL	Poland		
CM	Cameroon	KR	Republic of Korea	PT	Portugal		
CN	China	KZ	Kazakhstan	RO	Romania		
CU	Cuba	LC	Saint Lucia	RU	Russian Federation		
CZ	Czech Republic	LI	Liechtenstein	SD	Sudan		
DE	Germany	LK	Sri Lanka	SE	Sweden		
DK	Denmark	LR	Liberia	SG	Singapore		
EE	Estonia						

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A TISSUE DISPENSER SHAPED TO FIT IN A CUPHOLDER

This invention relates to tissue dispensers and, more particularly, to portable dispensers for use in vehicles.

5

Summary of the Related Art

Facial tissue is sold and packaged in a number of ways. In fact, companies often spend a great deal of money and effort designing attractive, convenient packages for tissues.

Tissue dispensers are often designed both for convenience in stacking in store displays and also for convenient use in the home. For both these purposes, tissue dispensers typically are designed with a large, stable footprint. Accordingly, when a consumer takes a tissue from the container, the container does not tip over or fall.

Convenience can also be extremely important for a tissue dispenser. Accordingly, pocket-size travel tissue dispensers are common. These tissue dispensers are rectangular in shape and include flexible packaging. The design focuses on portability. Accordingly, the dispensers are made to lay flat, and to fit in a pocket or purse. The flexibility increases ease and comfort when a consumer carries the packet in a pocket.

One company has introduced a square tissue box having external dimensions of about 4 7/8 inches length and width, with a depth of about 1 1/2 inches. This box may be placed in the side pockets of the interior of a front door of an automobile, or squeezed between the front seat and dash console of an automobile. This dispenser is a "fluff-up" dispenser, where an edge of the next tissue to be dispensed sticks out from the container.

Summary of the Invention

According to one embodiment of the present invention, a tissue container is disclosed that holds a plurality of tissues. According to this embodiment, the tissue container includes a substantially stiff body that substantially encircles the tissues, and the body is shaped to fit in a cup holder. The tissue container may be shaped like a beverage container, such as a coffee cup, mug or soda can. According to one embodiment, the body is open at the top, and tissues may be accessed through the top.

30

According to another embodiment of the present invention, a tissue container for holding tissues is disclosed. According to this embodiment, the body of the tissue container is shaped like a beverage container.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, a method of dispensing tissues is disclosed. According to this method, a tissue dispenser that is shaped to fit in a cup holder is provided. A plurality of tissues are placed in the dispenser so that an edge of each tissue is located near the top of the dispenser, and tissues are removed through the top of the dispenser.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, a method of dispensing tissues is disclosed. According to this method, a tissue dispenser cover is provided, the cover being shaped to fit in a cup holder. A tissue dispenser containing a plurality of tissues is also provided. The tissue dispenser is placed in the tissue dispenser cover, and tissues are dispensed from the dispenser.

15

Brief Description of Drawings

FIG. 1 illustrates one embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 1, with a cap removed.

FIG. 3 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 1 with a lift flap removed.

20 FIG. 4 illustrates a cross-sectional side view of the embodiment of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4A illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention, shaped generally like a coffee cup.

FIG. 4B illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention, shaped generally like a soda can.

25 FIG. 4C illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention, incorporating another mechanism for accessing tissues within the container.

FIG. 4D illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention, having a generally rectangular footprint.

30 FIG. 4E illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention, with fluff-up dispensing.

FIG. 4F illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 4E, with a tissue ready to be dispensed.

FIG. 5 illustrates a tissue box cover according to another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 5, with a cap opened.

FIG. 6A illustrates a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 5.

5 FIG. 6B illustrates a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 illustrates a tissue box cover according to another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 illustrates a tissue box cover according to another embodiment of the present invention.

10

Detailed Description

Use of automobiles (including cars, vans and trucks) has become a staple of everyone's lives. People are spending increasing amounts of time in their cars and are expecting more from them. For example telephones and CD players have been incorporated
15 into cars.

Currently, no good solution exists for dispensing tissues in a car. Tissue dispensers sold for home use are too bulky for use in an automobile. In addition, there is seldom a convenient place to set such a box. Missing from the art is a convenient tissue dispenser that is easy to use and which remains stable in a car. While one solution is to build some sort of
20 special mechanism into the car to hold tissue, this can be both expensive and unattractive. Ideally, the tissue dispenser does not require any expensive or unattractive modification to the structure of the car.

Pocket-size tissue containers, having soft and clear wrapping, are not aesthetically pleasing for use in a car as a stand-alone object. In addition, pocket-size tissue containers
25 require use of both hands to efficiently dispense a tissue. One hand is required to hold the plastic wrapping, while the other hand flips a sticky flap on the container back to extract a tissue. A stable platform for locating the pocket-size tissue containers, permitting easy access by the driver of the automobile may be difficult to find.

The square tissue box for use in the door pocket of a car or for placement in the space
30 between the front seats and the transmission console also have proved inadequate. First, the boxes are designed to "fluff-up." As a result, when the box is full of tissues, the first few tissues can be difficult to remove (because of the friction within the box). In addition, tissues

hang over the edge of the box after the first one has been dispensed. This is both unattractive and can result in the tissue getting dirty before it is dispensed for use.

More important, the tissue box cannot be located in a convenient place. The box only fits sideways into a door pocket. The door pocket can be difficult to reach, particularly for a passenger who is not the driver. In addition, there is no place located in the rear of the car for conveniently locating the box. Finally, the door pocket can be located too low for convenient use or may be so deep as to interfere with accessing tissues.

Various embodiments of the present invention solve some or all of the above problems, as well as others, as will become apparent from the detailed description below.

FIG. 1 illustrates one embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 1 shows a tissue container 11. The tissue container may be made from stiff paper, cardboard, plastic or some other substantially rigid material.

The tissues are located on the interior of tissue container 11. In this particular embodiment, standard pocket-size folded tissues may be used, approximately 4 1/4 inches by 2 1/8 inches, arranged in a 3/4 inch stack. Tissue container 11 includes two different alternatives for accessing tissues held within the container 11. For the first, a perforation 12 in the container 11 is included. This permits cap 18 to be removed. The cap 18 may be separated from the remainder of the container 11 by pulling a pull tab 13. The pull tab 13 is connected to a string which would tear container 11 along perforated line 12.

FIG. 2 illustrates the tissue container 11 with the cap 18 removed. As shown in FIG. 2, the tissue 20 is included within the container 11.

Tissue 20 can be folded in any of a variety of ways, apparent to one of skill in the art. The tissue is folded to a size to fit within the container 11.

Container 11 is sized to fit within a cup holder typically found in automobiles. Thus, container 11, in one embodiment, is cylindrical. The diameter of tissue container 11 (at least at its lower portion) is sized to fit within automobile cup holders. The particular diameter may be less than about four inches. Preferably, the diameter of the lower portion is less than 2 3/4 inches, to accommodate most car cup-holders. The height of the container is selected to accommodate the tissue, and may be about 4 1/2 inches. The portion sized to fit in a car cup-holder may extend for the bottom 1 1/2 inches of the container -- to fit fully in a standard cup-holder. In the embodiment of FIGs. 1 and 2, the diameter is uniform along the height of the tissue container.

As can be seen in FIG. 2, tissues may be accessed from the top of the tissue container 11. This particular embodiment permits tissues to be removed from the container with ease. Thus, when the container 11 is located in an automobile cup holder, a single hand can easily remove a tissue from the container.

5 As discussed below, according to another aspect of this invention, the container can be shaped like a beverage can. Since most automobile cup holders are designed to securely hold a beverage can, this can assure that the tissue container 11 has a shape appropriate for use in an automobile. The container can also be shaped like a coffee cup or a coffee mug. These
10 embodiments are attractive and also serve to ensure that the container fits within the cup-holder.

Returning to FIG. 1, a second mechanism is provided for accessing tissue contained within container 11. A lift flap 19 is defined in cap 18 by perforated lines 14. For convenience, an opening 16 permits a consumer to grasp lift flap 19 from front edge 15 of the lift flap 19. To prevent tissue within container 11 from getting dirty, opening 16 preferably is
15 covered with plastic. For a container 11 holding dry facial tissue, this plastic can line just the cap 18, or even be secured with an adhesive only to the front of the cap 18. If moist tissue (such as diaper wipes) is held within container 11, then the plastic lining may, where appropriate, cover the entire interior of container 11. This can be used to keep the container dry (e.g., where the container is made of pressed paper or cardboard) and also prevents the
20 moist tissue from drying out.

FIG. 3 shows the tissue container 11 with the lift flap 19 removed. As shown at 16, the plastic band forms around the interior of the vertical portion of cap 18. Where moist tissue is used, the plastic liner may be attached and the plastic liner covers the whole interior of the container 11, the plastic liner may be attached to the lift flap with an adhesive and
25 perforated so that this portion of the liner is removed along with the lift flap 19.

The perforations 14 may be arranged in cap 18 to leave sides 31 on the container portion 11 when the lift flap 19 is removed. This holds tissues in the container in the event that the container should fall, while still allowing the consumer to remove tissue 20 with ease and with only one hand. In another embodiment, the lift flap 19 can be flexibly connected to
30 the rear of the tissue box. This would permit the lid to be kept, to cover the tissues when no tissue is being taken from the container.

Returning to FIG. 1, the tissue container may include one or more additional mechanisms for stabilizing the container within a car. As described above, one such mechanism is the shape of the container -- shaped to be securely held in an automobile cup holder. In addition, the container 11 includes a flap 17a. The flap 17a is securely affixed
5 (using an adhesive or laminated) at 17c. A light adhesive holds the remainder of the flap 17a to the container 11. A pull flap 17b may be left unsecured, to make it easier to loosen the bulk of the flap 17a from container 11.

FIG. 4 illustrates the two positions of the flap 17a. FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the container of FIG. 1. The container 11 has a cap 18 (which is shown as still attached in
10 FIG. 4, but which could be removed during use). Tissue 20 is contained within the container 11. As shown at 43, the container may have folded material at the bottom and/or top as a way of manufacturing the cylindrical container with sides and a bottom.

As originally configured, the flap is in the position shown at 42. The consumer can pull at flap 17b to loosen the flap from the container. Flap 17b may be rigid to assist in
15 pulling the flap from container 11 and for use of the flap to hold the container in a car.

The flap is shown in an open position at 41. As illustrated, the flap remains attached to the container at 24.

Flap 41 can be used to help secure the tissue container within an automobile (or elsewhere). Pull flap 17b can be inserted into a narrow opening (such as an ash tray, air vent
20 or at the top of a closed window), and the tissue container left to hang therefrom. In an alternative embodiment, flap 41 can include male and female hook and loop fasteners (e.g., VELCRO) as indicated at 44a and 44b. This would permit the flap 41 to be looped around any object in a car, or elsewhere, to secure the tissue container. Of course, the VELCRO could be located in other positions to achieve the same result.

25 Loose VELCRO could also be provided with the tissue container for affixing the VELCRO to the car and the tissue box in any location.

FIG. 4A illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container 11, according to the present invention. In this embodiment, the tissue container 11 is shaped to resemble a coffee cup. This is both attractive and will help assure that the container fits within coffee cup
30 holders made for automobiles. In this particular embodiment, the container is wider toward the top of the container and narrower toward the bottom of the container -- like most ordinary coffee cups. As for the earlier embodiment, the diameter of the bottom of the container is

- 7 -

preferably less than four inches and may be 2 3/4 inches or less. This container may also be about 4 1/2 inches in height. In the alternative, as for the other embodiments described herein, the tissue container may be taller than the tissues intended to be placed in the container. In this case, a false bottom may be included on the tissue container, to hold the tissues toward the top of the container. This would permit a wider portion at the top of the container, allowing more room for a greater number of tissues and easier dispensing. The bottom of the container (not holding any tissues) is smaller than the top, but fits within a coffee cup holder in an automobile.

In the embodiment of FIG. 4A, like the embodiment of FIG. 1, access to the tissues may be obtained by pulling back a portion 46a of the lid 46c of the tissue container 11. The sides of the portion 46a of the lid 46c is perforated, permitting the portion 46a to be removed or at least torn away from the front of the lid 46c, providing access to the tissues. The portion 46a of the lid 46c includes a pull tab 46b, to permit easy tearing of the portion 46a off from the lid 46c. Of course, other mechanisms, including those described above, can be used to access the tissues.

The embodiment of FIG. 4A, like the embodiment of FIG. 1, also includes a flap 17a that can be used as an alternative method to position and stabilize the tissue container 11 within an automobile.

In the embodiment of FIG. 4A, folded material 45a and 45b forms a ridge around the top and the bottom of the tissue container 11. This folded material may be similar to the folded material 43 of FIG. 4. In any event, this can both be convenient from the manufacturing perspective and, in addition, assist to make the tissue container 11 resemble a coffee cup.

FIG. 4B illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container, designed to resemble a soda can. Like the earlier embodiments, this embodiment includes the flap 17a. Like the embodiment of FIG. 4A, tissues may be accessed by removing portion 46a of the lid 46c, by pulling on a pull tab 46b. This embodiment also includes a ridge at the top 45a and a ridge at the bottom 45b. These ridges may be made of folded material, as a convenience in the manufacturing process. In any event, these ridges also make the tissue container appear more like a soda can, making the appearance in a car more natural.

FIG. 4C illustrates another alternative embodiment for accessing tissue in a tissue container according to one of the above embodiments. As for the earlier embodiments, the

tissue container 11 may include a flap (not shown) that may be used as an alternative mechanism to stabilize or position the tissue container 11 within an automobile. Such a flap is preferably disposed on the rear of the container. The tissue container 11 includes a top portion 404. Like the earlier embodiments, a portion 405 of the lid 404 can be removed (or
5 peeled back) by pulling on a pull tab 406.

In the alternative, a portion 408 of the top of the tissue container 11 can be folded back. The top of the tissue container includes perforations 402a and 402b. When these perforations are torn, a lift cap portion 408 of the lid may be folded back along an axis 403. The lift cap portion 408 of the lid, therefore, remains attached to the tissue container 11 and
10 can be folded up and down as necessary to dispense tissues.

The lift cap portion 408 of the top of the tissue container includes a cut out 401. This permits the user to more easily tear back the lift cap portion 408 of the lid by lifting on the top edge of the cut out 401. As for the embodiment described with reference to FIG. 1, a plastic (or other material) lining 16 may be included to protect the tissues from being dirtied before
15 the lift cap portion 408 is raised or after it is closed.

FIG. 4D illustrates another embodiment of a tissue container according to the present invention. This particular tissue container 410 is rectangular in shape, but is sized to fit within an automobile cup holder. In particular, the complete tissue container may have a length 410a of 2 ½ inches or less, a width 410b of 1 ¾ inches or less, at least in the lower portion of the
20 tissue container that would fit within the cup holder (e.g., the bottom 1 ½ inches). As for the above embodiments, variations in shape and size can of course be made.

In the embodiment of FIG. 4D, tissues 420 are removed from the container through an opening at the top of the container 410. In FIG. 4D, a portion 412 of the top of the container has already been removed. As for the above embodiments, the portion 412 may be originally
25 formed as a part of the top of the container, with perforations along the edges of the portion 412 of the lid that is removed and the top of the container 411.

As with the above embodiments, a clear plastic lining 416 may be included to permit a user to more conveniently grasp an edge of the removable portion 412 of the lid.

In this embodiment, as for the other embodiments, a flap may be used as an alternative
30 mechanism to position the tissue container 410 within the automobile. The flap may be located on the back of the container.

The container of FIG. 4D may also be made of a hard material and refilled with loose or packaged tissue. In this case, portion 412 may be a lid, hinged to the body of the container at the back.

Any of the above embodiments may be formed from one of a number of different materials. In one embodiment, the tissue container is formed of a sturdy paper. For cylindrical embodiments, the paper may be cut, perforated (as needed or appropriate for the particular embodiment), rolled to a specific diameter and shape, glued, pressed, filled with tissues, and sealed with a pre-perforated cap and a bottom. The cap, and the bottom may be sealed as described with reference to FIG. 4 by folding and pressing edges of material. In the case of a rectangular embodiment, the paper may be cut, perforated (as appropriate), folded to specific dimensions, filled with tissues, and glued in the desired shape. Of course, other methods of manufacturing the above and other embodiments would be readily apparent to one of skill in the art based on the disclosure provided herein.

FIG. 4E illustrates another embodiment of the tissue container according to the present invention. In this embodiment, the tissue container 430 includes a portion 432 that can be removed. The portion 432 is defined by a perforation in the top 434 of the tissue container 430. A pull tab 435 can permit easy removal of the portion 432. When the portion 432 is removed, tissues may be accessed from the inside of the container. These tissues may be accessed as a fluff-up dispenser, as known in the art. In the embodiment of FIG. 4E, a flap 431 is included, similar to the flaps discussed with reference to the embodiments described above.

FIG. 4F illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 4E, with a tissue 436 ready for dispensing through an opening 437 in the top 434 of the tissue container 430.

The container 11 of FIGS. 1-4F may be sold as a disposable unit. That is, after the tissue 20 within container 11 is used, the box 11 can be discarded. In the alternative (or in addition), additional tissue may be provided to refill container 11. This tissue is preferably sized and folded to fit within container 11.

FIG. 5 illustrates a tissue box cover 50. The tissue box cover 50 may be used to hold disposable tissue box containers, such as those shown in FIG. 1 (the box cover may also be used to hold loose tissue or commercially available pocket-size tissue packages). In this case, the tissue box cover 50 is sized slightly larger than a tissue container 11 that may be inserted

in the box cover 50. Like the tissue container 11, the tissue box cover 50 is preferably sized to fit within an automobile cup holder. The box cover 50 may be cylindrical and have a diameter of less than four inches and preferably less than 2 3/4 inches. As for the tissue containers, the box cover may be shaped like a beverage can to help assure that the shape is appropriate to be
5 securely held in an automobile cup holder. In another embodiment, the tissue box may be shaped like a coffee cup or mug.

The box cover 50 may be formed of a rigid material such as a hard plastic, vinyl, PVC, metal, wood. The cover 50 may be made to have an appearance to match the particular interior of a car in which the cover is to be used. Indeed, a variety of covers 50 may be
10 designed to match the interior of various automobiles, or as above, to look like beverage can or coffee cup or mug.

The box cover 50 includes a base portion 51, and a cap 56. The cap may screw on (or twist on) to the base 51. The cap 56 includes a lid 53. The lid 53 is connected to cap 56 by a hinge 54. The hinge may be formed simply by a thinning of the material the cap is made of,
15 or through any other mechanism known in the art.

FIG. 6 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 5, when the cap 53 is opened. As shown in FIG. 6, the top sides of the cap 52 may form a trapezoid having a wider opening near the front of the container 51. This permits easier access of the tissue from the container 50, while more securely holding in the tissue towards the rear of the container.

20 Returning to FIG. 5, the lid 53 of the container 50 includes a button 55. This can be a push button to release the lid 53 to permit opening. The button may push on a clasp (not shown) that releasably holds lid 53 in place. In the alternative, a simple indentation can be provided, to assist in gripping the cap for opening.

FIG. 6A illustrates a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 5. The flap 601 may be
25 rigid or flexible. In this particular embodiment, flap 601 is rigid and is pivotally attached to the tissue box cover 51. The flap includes a right angle fold 602, which tucks under the body of the tissue box cover. The flap 601 and right angle piece 602 fit into an indentation 603 in the tissue box cover 51. The flap 601 permits the tissue box cover 51 to be hung on a partially open window of the car, or located elsewhere, as for the flaps discussed with reference to the
30 earlier embodiments.

FIG. 6B illustrates a bottom view of the embodiment of FIG. 5. As shown, the end 602 of flap 601 is tucked into an indentation in the bottom of the tissue box cover 51. An

indentation 604 may be included in the bottom of the tissue box cover 51, to make it easier to push on the end 602 of the flap 601, making it easier to push the flap away from the body of the tissue box cover 51.

FIG. 7 illustrates another embodiment of a tissue box cover according to the present invention. Like the embodiment of FIGs. 5 and 6, the tissue box cover may be used to hold loose tissue, or tissue packaged in another manner such as pocket-size travel tissue now commercially available.

The tissue box cover of FIG. 7 includes an upper portion 71 for dispensing tissues, and a lower portion 72 that is shaped to fit within a coffee cup holder in a vehicle. That is, the lower portion 72 is shaped according to the dimensions generally described above. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 7, the base portion 72 is larger than the dispensing portion 71. In this embodiment, therefore, the tissues when placed inside of the container may extend down into the base portion 72. In other embodiments, the dispensing portion 71 may be larger than the base portion 72. In this case, larger tissue (or more) may be used, because the dispensing portion 71 is not limited in size by the shape of the cup holder. The tissue located within the tissue box cover, however, may no longer fit within, and no longer extend down into the base portion 72.

Tissue placed within the tissue box cover may be removed through opening 73. Tissues may be inserted in the top of the box 75, using a removable cap 74.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 7, the back of the tissue box cover is rounded. In this case, when quite a few of the tissues have been removed, the tissues may tend to fall into the back of the container. This may make it more difficult to reach the tissues through the opening 73. Accordingly, a removable push up bar 77 may be attached at the back of the box cover, using a clip 76. The push up bar extends down through the tissue box cover, and can be inserted when almost out of tissues, to push the tissues to the front. When the tissue box cover is full, the push up bar 77 can be removed and kept in a glove compartment or other place. In other embodiments, the shape of the dispensing portion 71 of the tissue box cover may be square or have another shape to obviate any need for a push up bar 77.

FIG. 8 illustrates another embodiment of a tissue box cover according to the present invention. In this embodiment, the tissue box cover 81 has a wide upper portion and a more narrow lower portion 85. The lower portion 85 is shaped as generally described above to fit within a cup holder in a vehicle. In this embodiment, the lower portion 85 has a depth 86 of

about 1 ½ inches. This depth 86 is selected to provide the best stability within the cup holder in which the tissue box cover 81 may be placed. The upper portion of the tissue box cover 81 in this embodiment is sized to fit a standard square tissue, as commercially available today. The tissues may be placed inside of the tissue box cover 81, and dispensed through the opening 84. In this embodiment, the back 83 of the upper portion of the tissue box cover 81 is flat. This reduces the space occupied by the upper portion of the tissue box cover 81 (reducing the chance that a dashboard or console might interfere with placing the tissue box cover 81 into a cup holder) and helps conform the shape of the upper portion of the tissue box cover 81 to folded tissues that may be placed in the tissue box cover 81. This embodiment also includes a lid 82 shaped to fit on top of the tissue box cover.

As described above, the box covers of FIGS. 5-8 can be used (and shaped) as holders for tissue containers such as those described in FIGS. 1-4F. In the alternative, tissue can be sold for placement directly in the box cover.

While the invention has been described generally with reference to dry facial tissue, application of the invention can be applied to other forms of tissue, such as moist diaper wipes or moist towelettes. In addition, the invention has application to conveniently dispensing tissues in other contexts, including other vehicles such as boats.

Having thus described at least one illustrative embodiment of the invention, various modifications and improvements will readily occur to those skilled in the art and are intended to be within the scope of the invention. Accordingly, the foregoing description is by way of example only and is not intended as limiting. The invention is limited only as defined in the following claims and the equivalents thereto.

What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

1. A tissue container for holding a plurality of tissues, comprising:
a substantially stiff body that substantially encircles the tissues when placed in the
5 body;
and wherein the body is shaped to fit in a cup holder.
2. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a beverage
container.
- 10 3. The tissue container of claim 2, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a
coffee cup.
4. The tissue container of claim 2, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a mug.
- 15 5. The tissue container of claim 2, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a soda can.
6. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein:
the body is open at a top of the body; and
20 the tissues when placed in the body may be accessed through the top.
7. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the body includes a removable top portion.
8. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the body includes a removable side portion.
- 25 9. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the body is made from the group consisting of
pressed paper and card board.
10. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the body is substantially cylindrical.
- 30 11. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein the body is rectangular.

12. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein a lower portion of the body has a maximum diameter of about four inches.
13. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein a lower portion of the body has a maximum
5 diameter of about two and three-quarters inches.
14. The tissue container of claim 1, wherein:
the body includes a top portion and a bottom portion each having a different shape;
and
10 the bottom portion is shaped to fit within the cup holder.
15. The tissue container of claim 1, further comprising a strap having an end coupled to the body.
- 15 16. A tissue container for holding tissues, comprising:
a body shaped like a beverage container for holding the tissues.
17. The tissue container of claim 16, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a coffee
cup.
20
18. The tissue container of claim 16, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a mug.
19. The tissue container of claim 16, wherein the tissue container is shaped like a soda
can.
25
20. A method of dispensing tissues, comprising steps of:
providing a tissue dispenser shaped to fit in a cup holder, the dispenser having a top;
placing a plurality of tissues in the dispenser so that an edge of each of the tissue is
proximate the top of the dispenser; and
30 removing tissues from the dispenser through the top.
21. A method of dispensing tissues, comprising steps of:

- 15 -

providing a tissue dispenser cover shaped to fit in a cup holder;
providing a tissue dispenser containing a plurality of tissues;
placing the tissue dispenser in the tissue dispenser cover; and
dispensing tissues from the tissue dispenser.

1/16

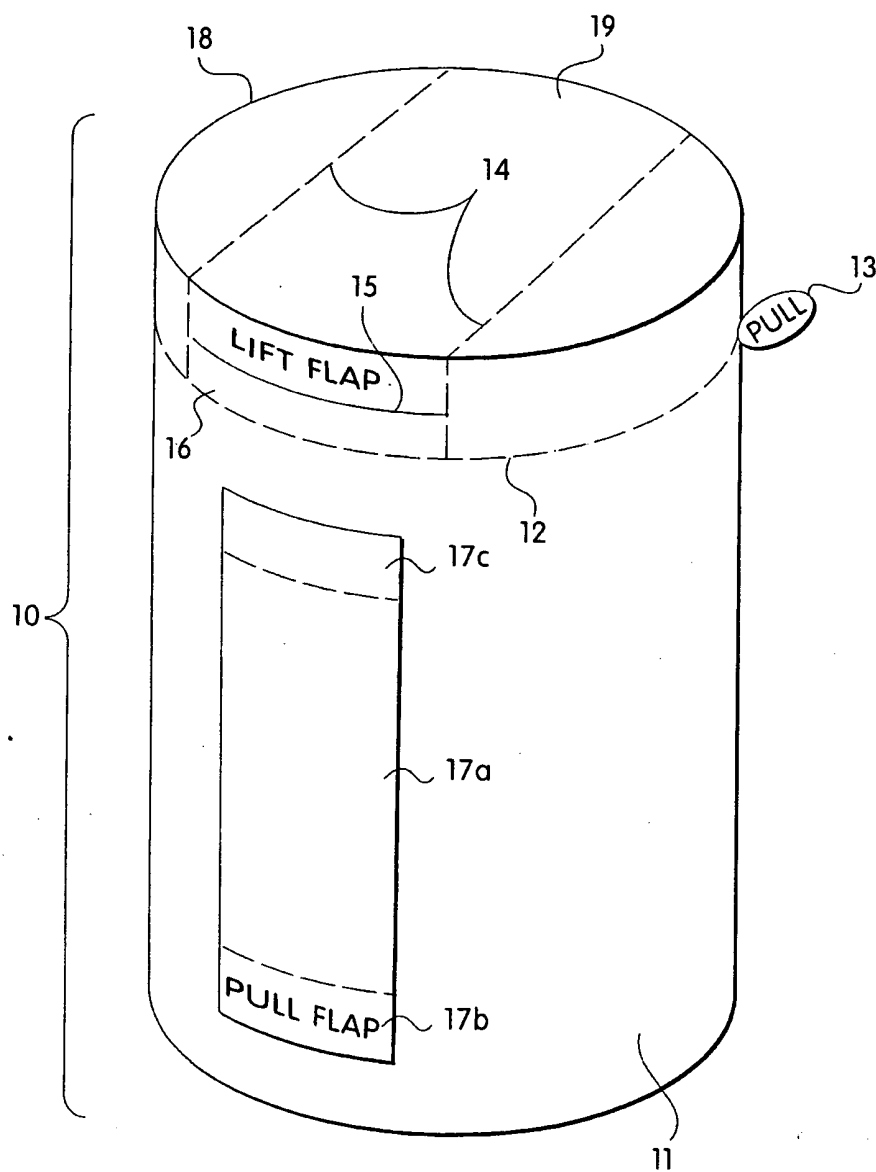


Fig. 1

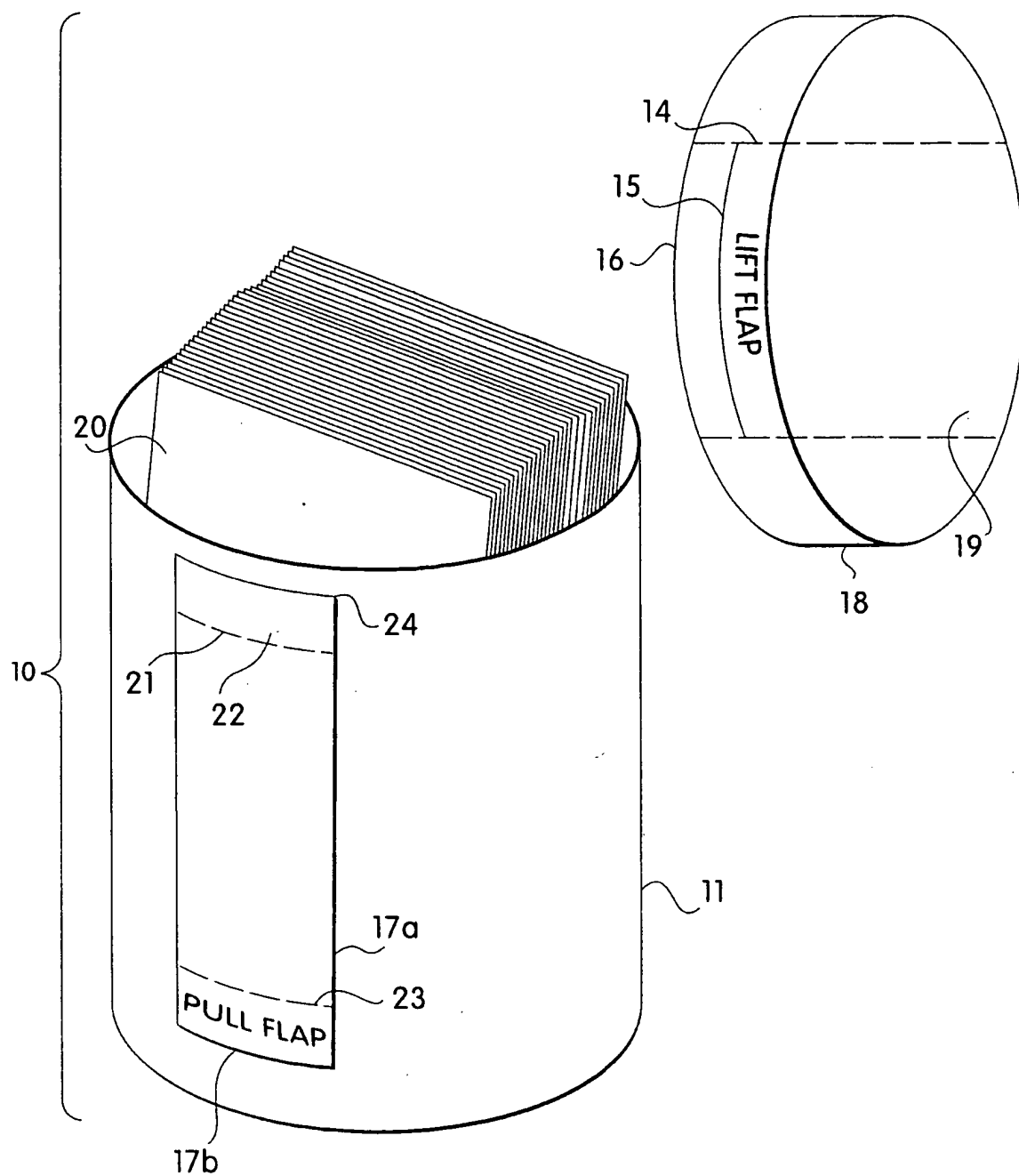


Fig. 2

3/16

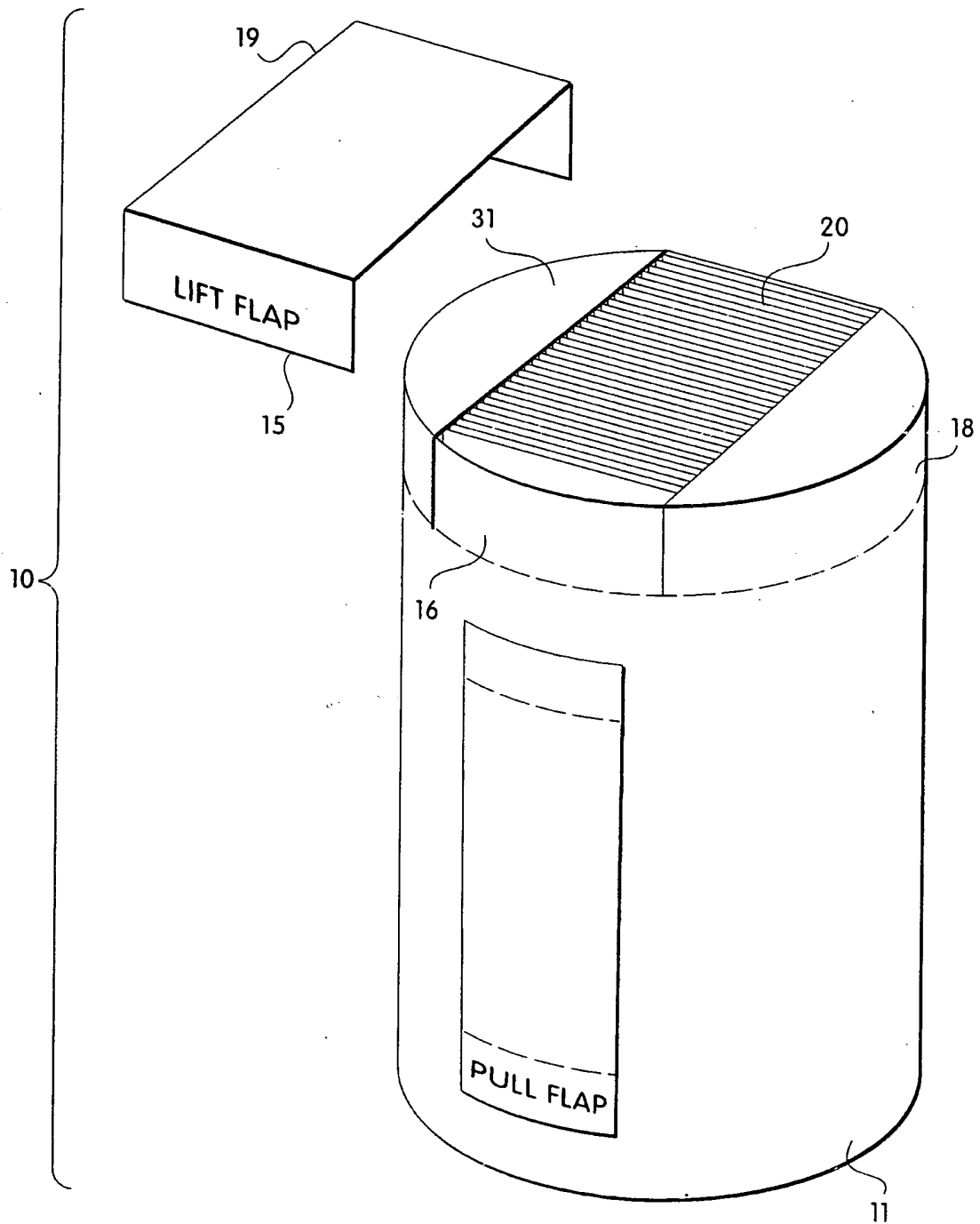


Fig. 3

4/16

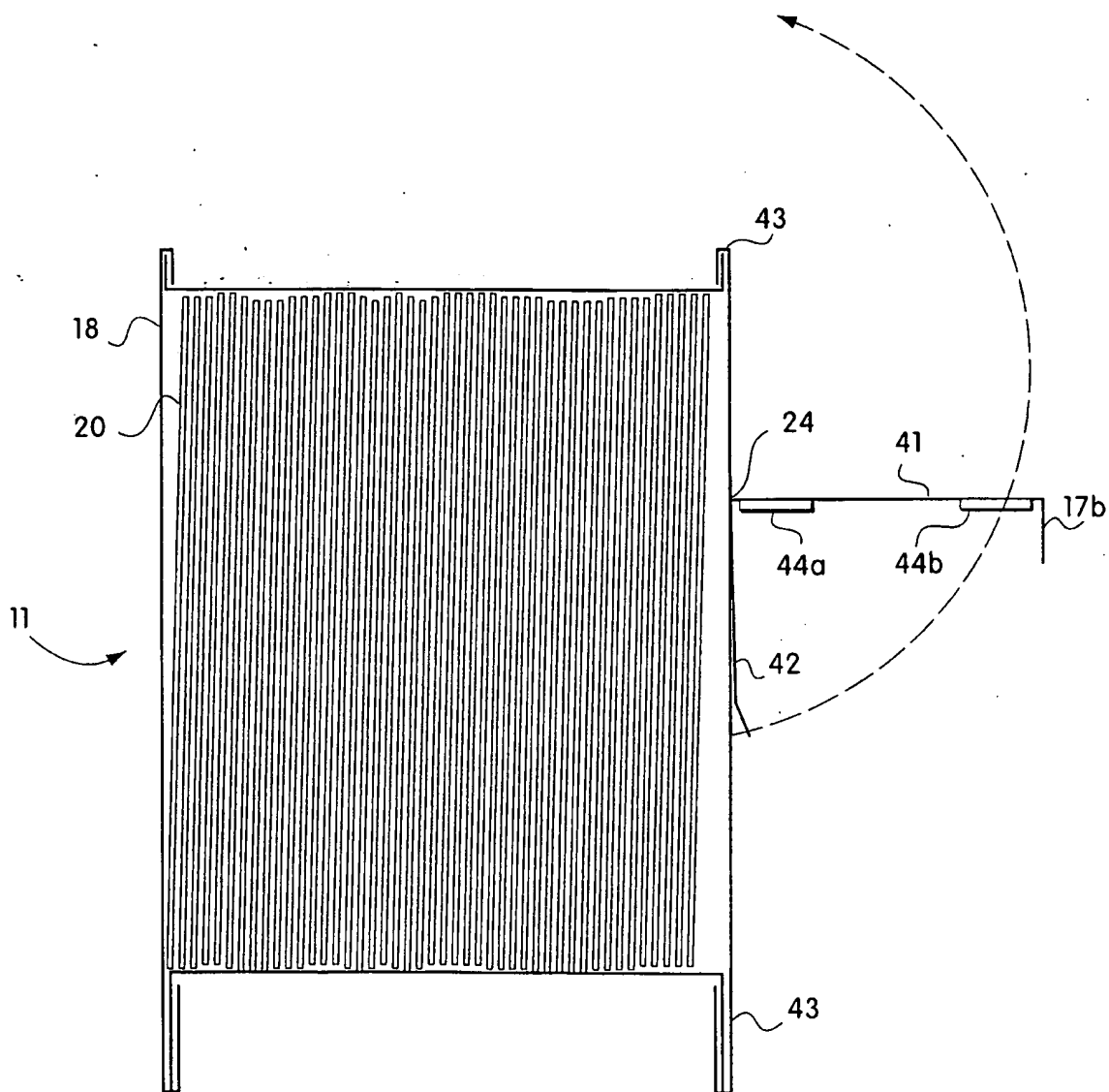


Fig. 4

5/16

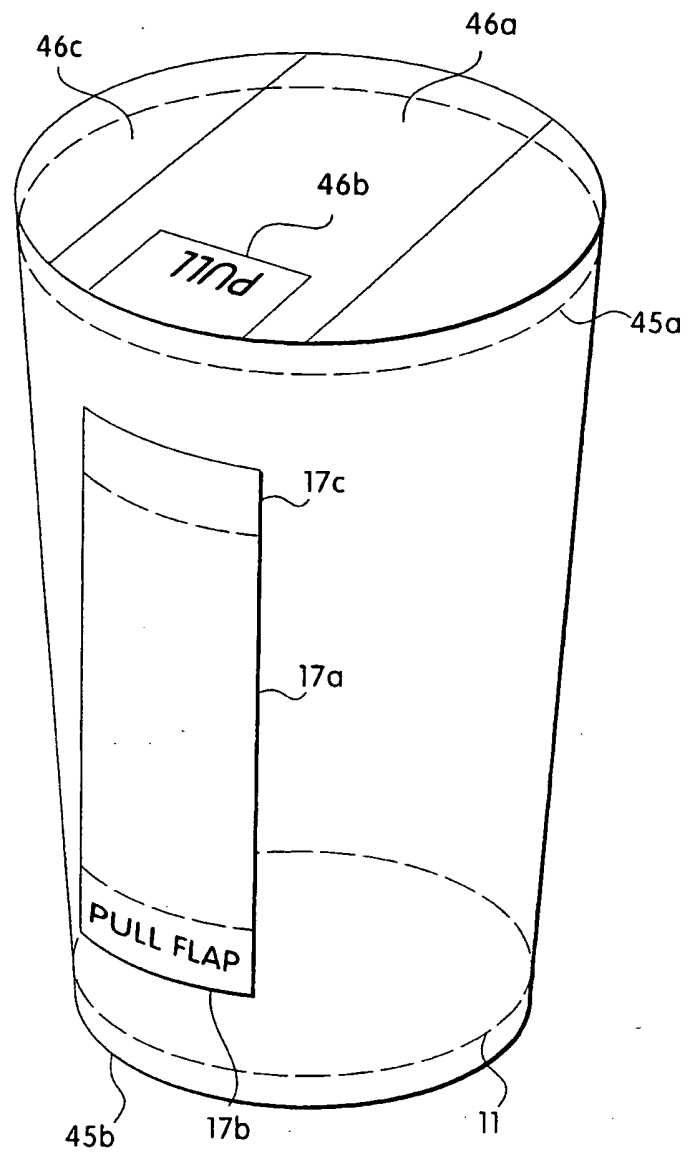


Fig. 4A

6/16

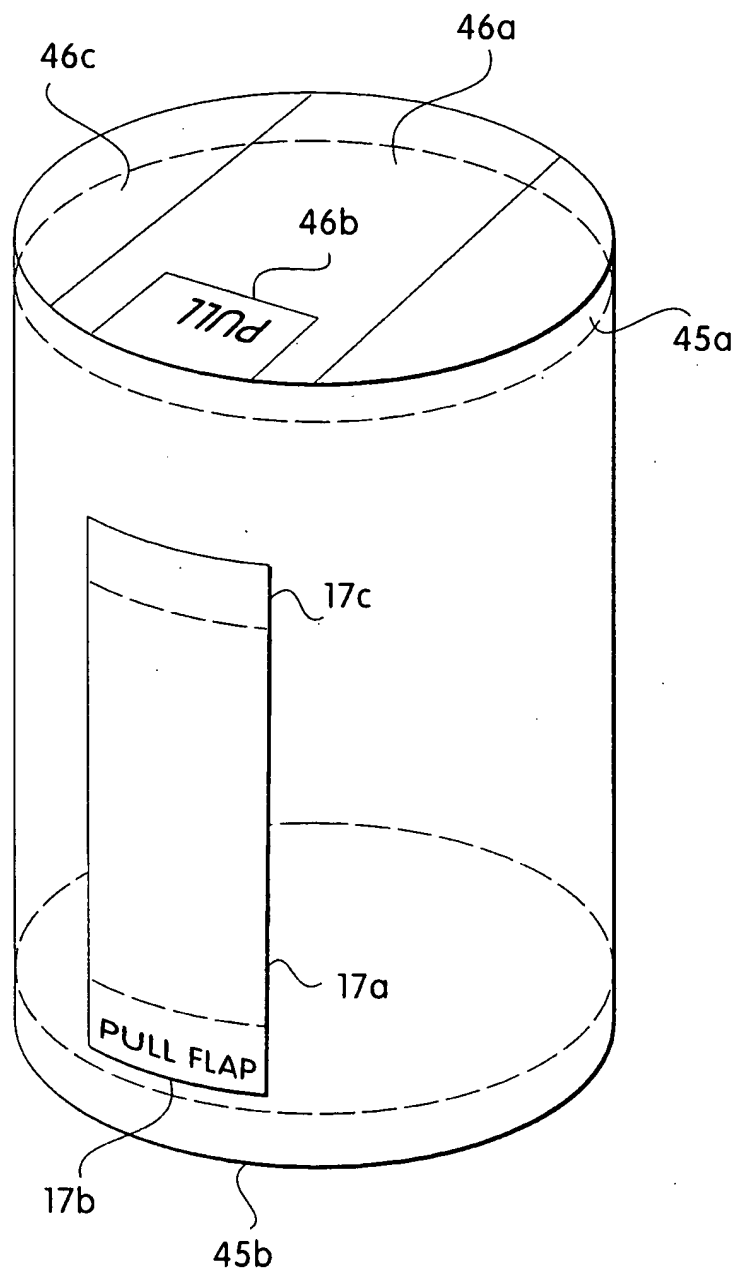


Fig. 4B

7/16

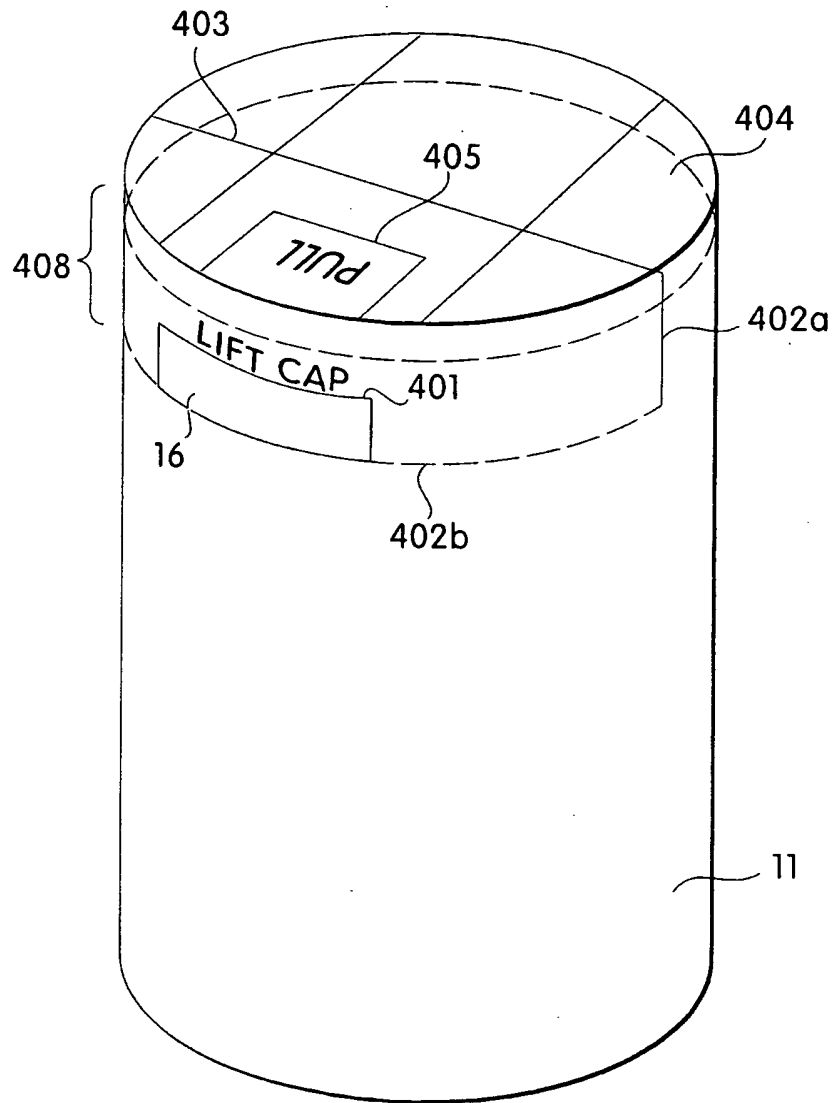


Fig. 4C

8/16

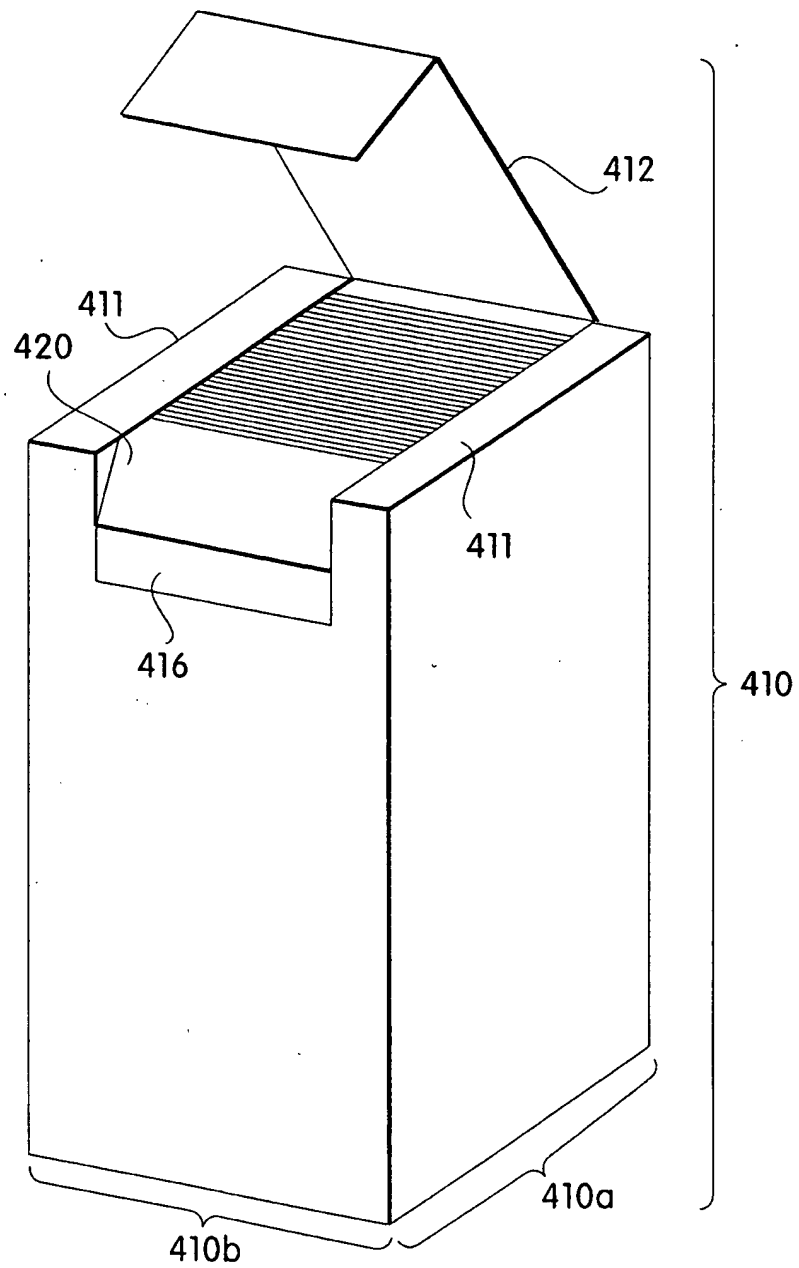


Fig. 4D

9/16

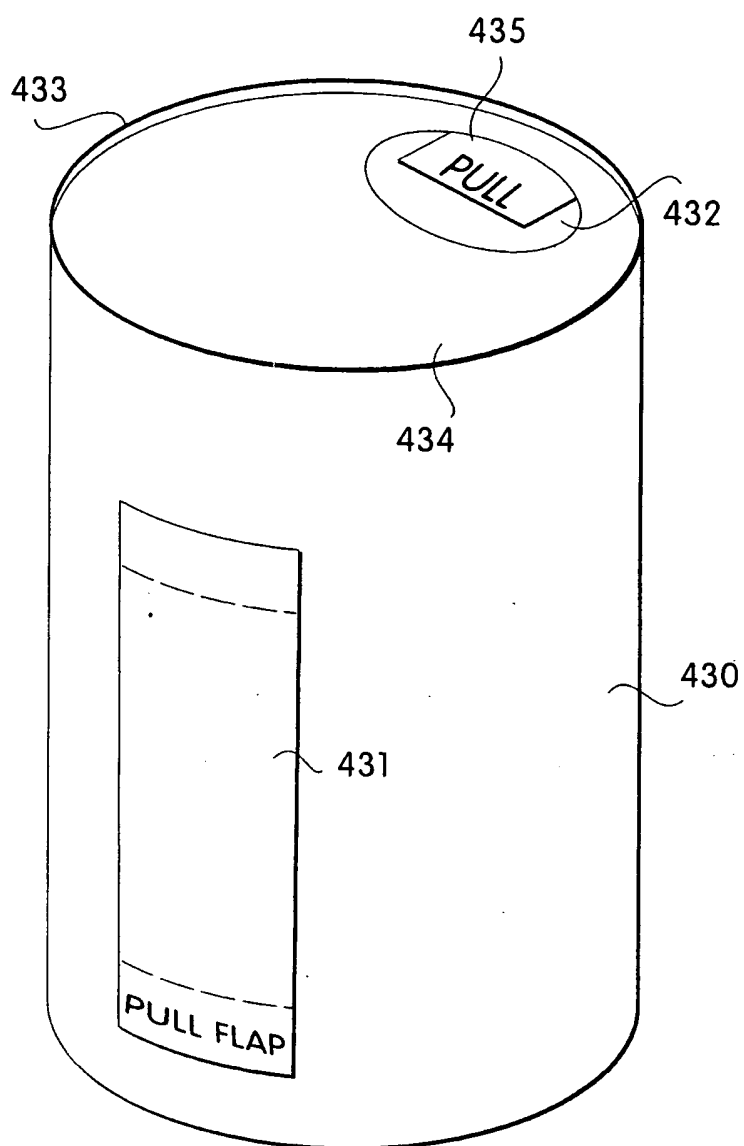


Fig. 4E

10/16

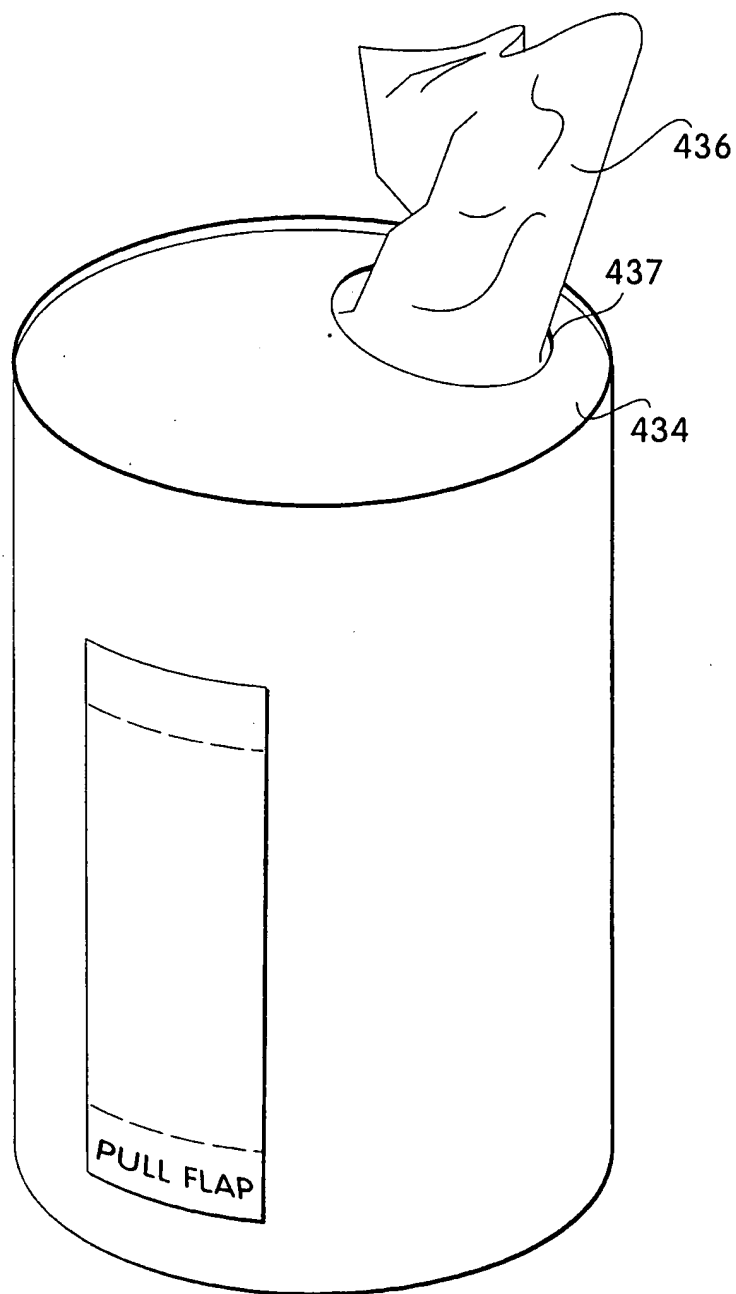


Fig. 4F

11/16

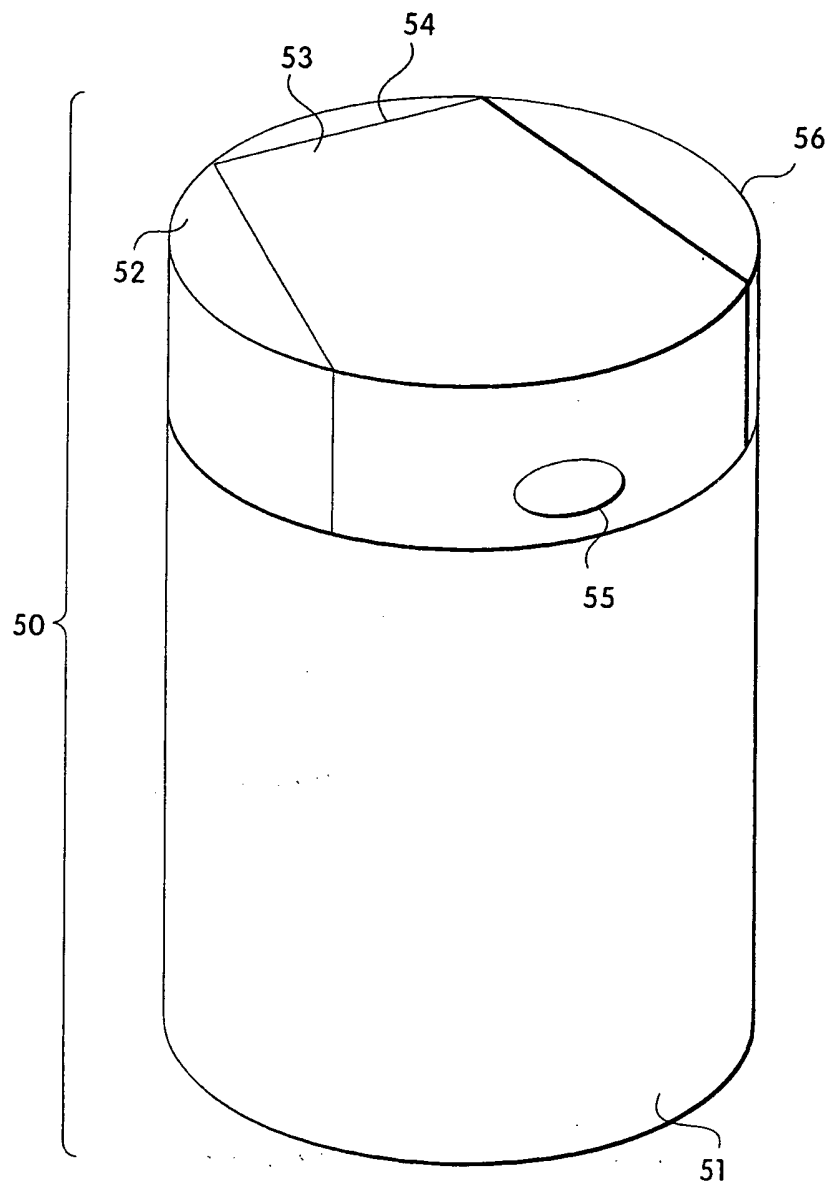


Fig. 5

12/16

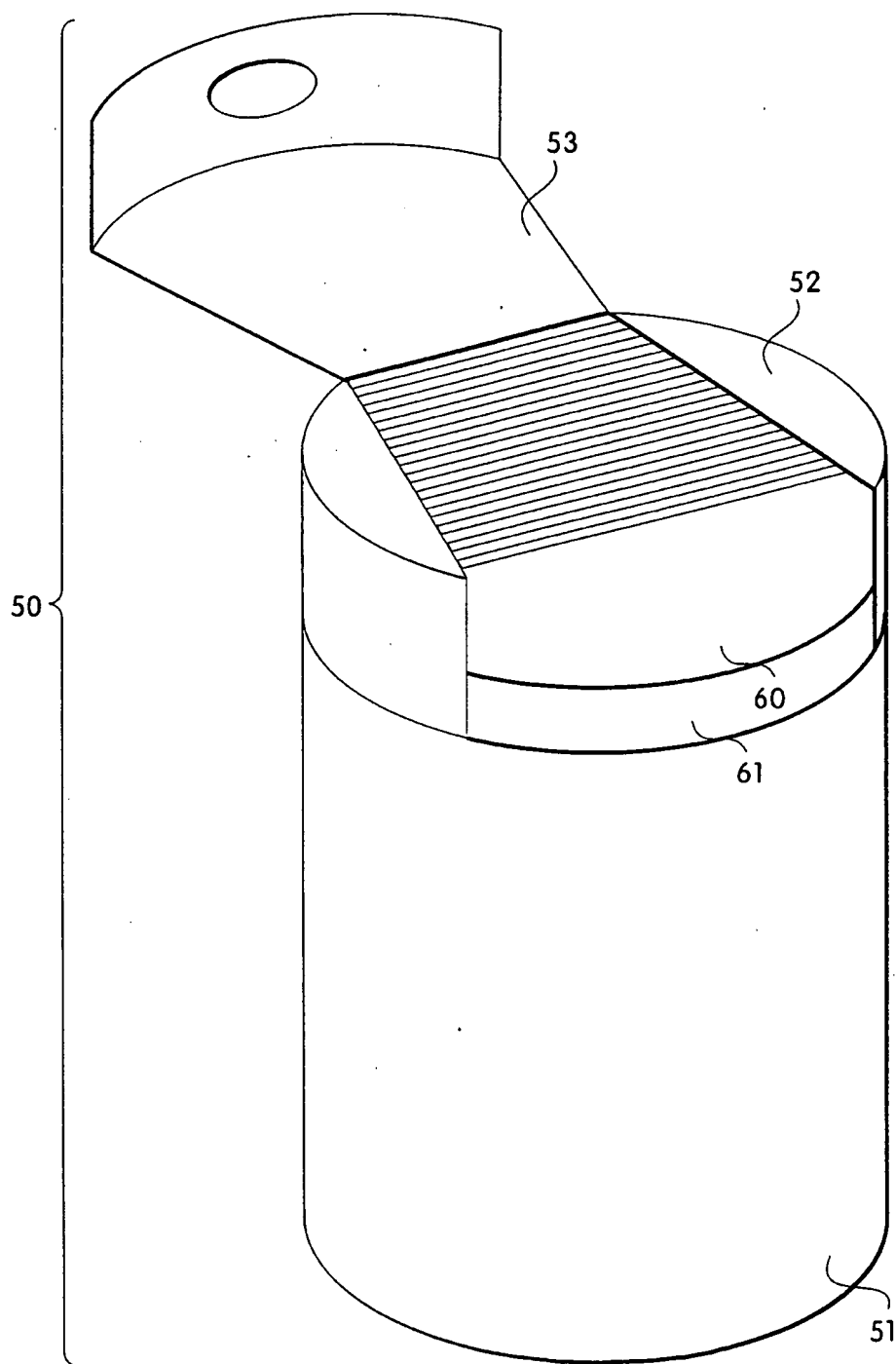


Fig. 6

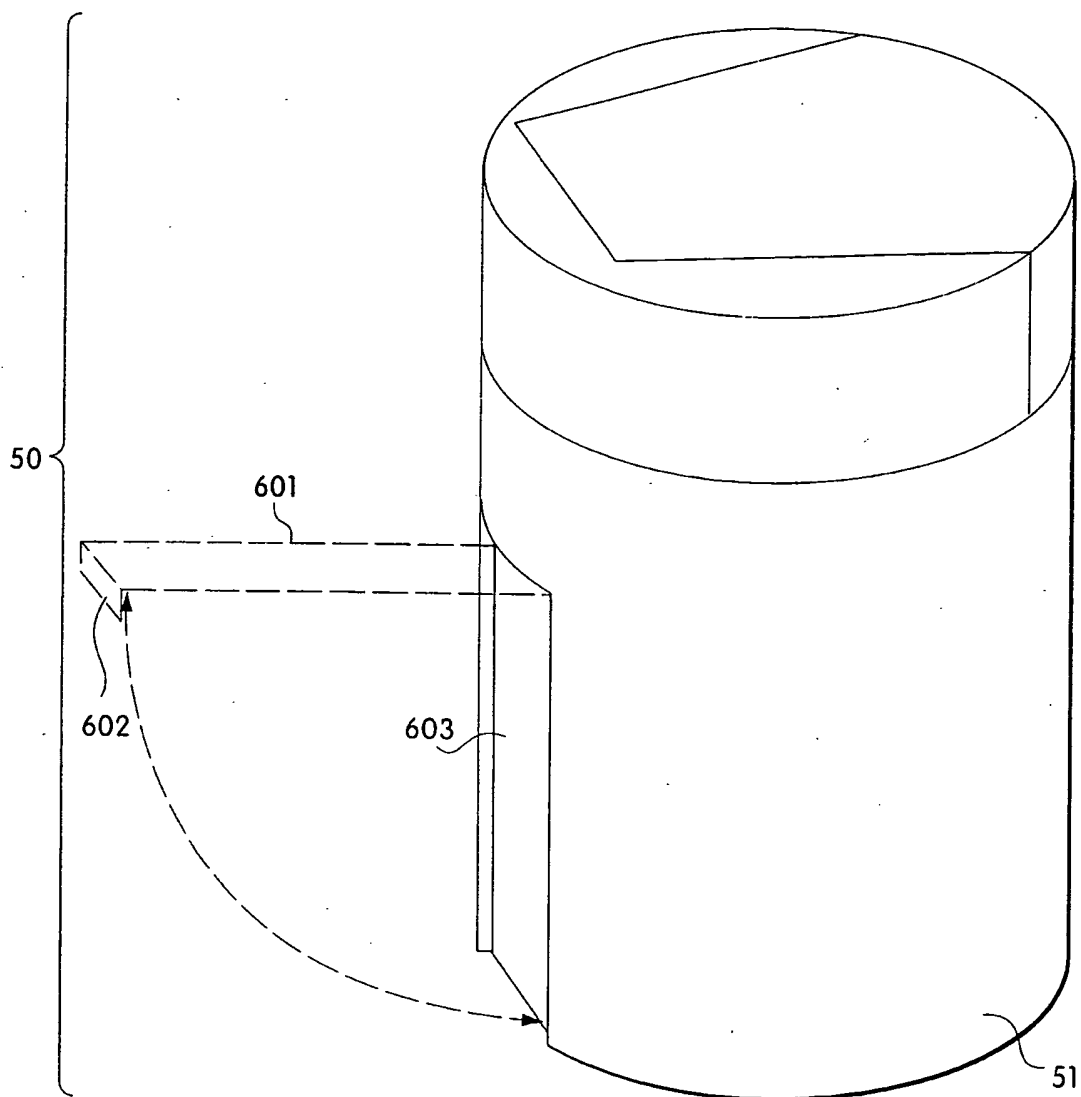


Fig. 6A

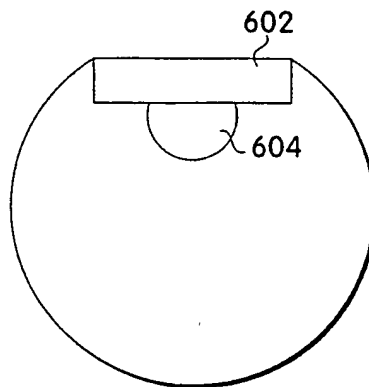


Fig. 6B

15/16

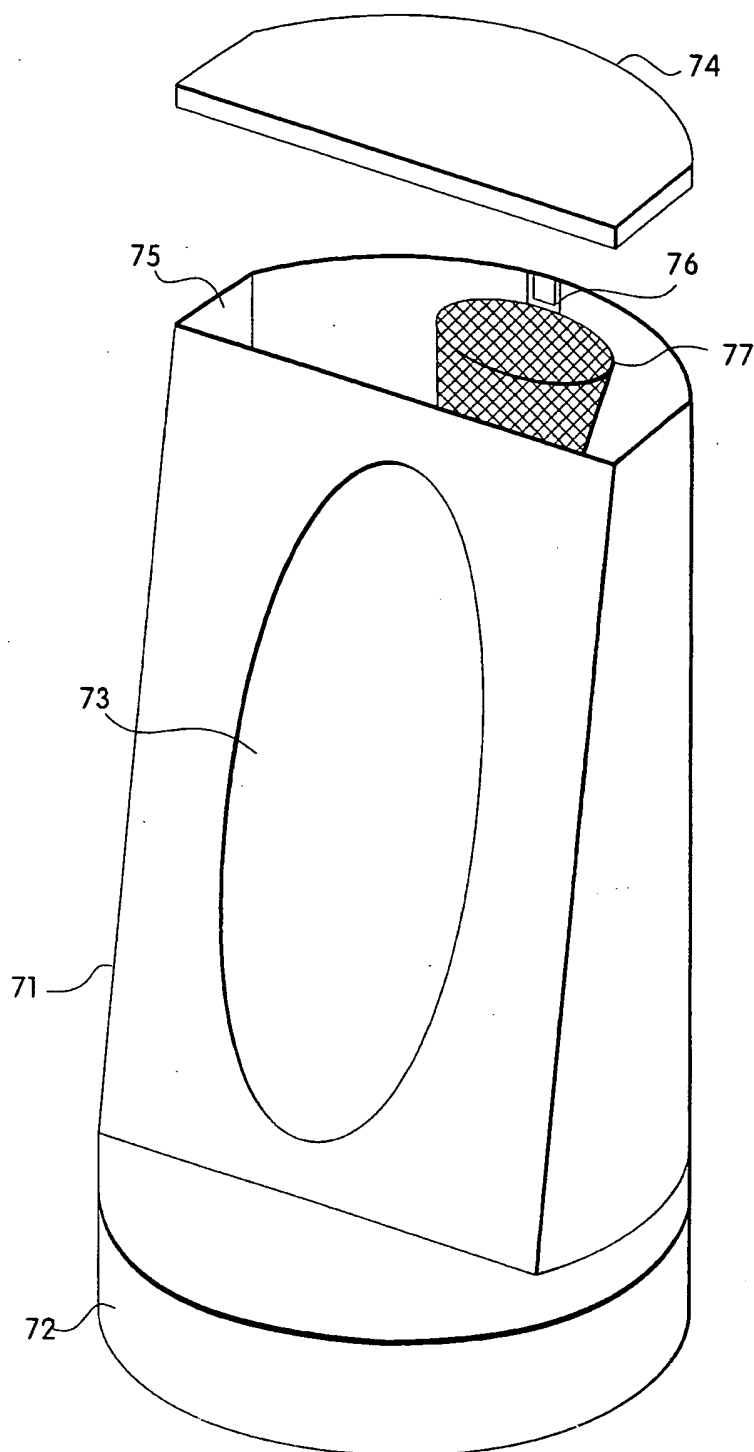


Fig. 7

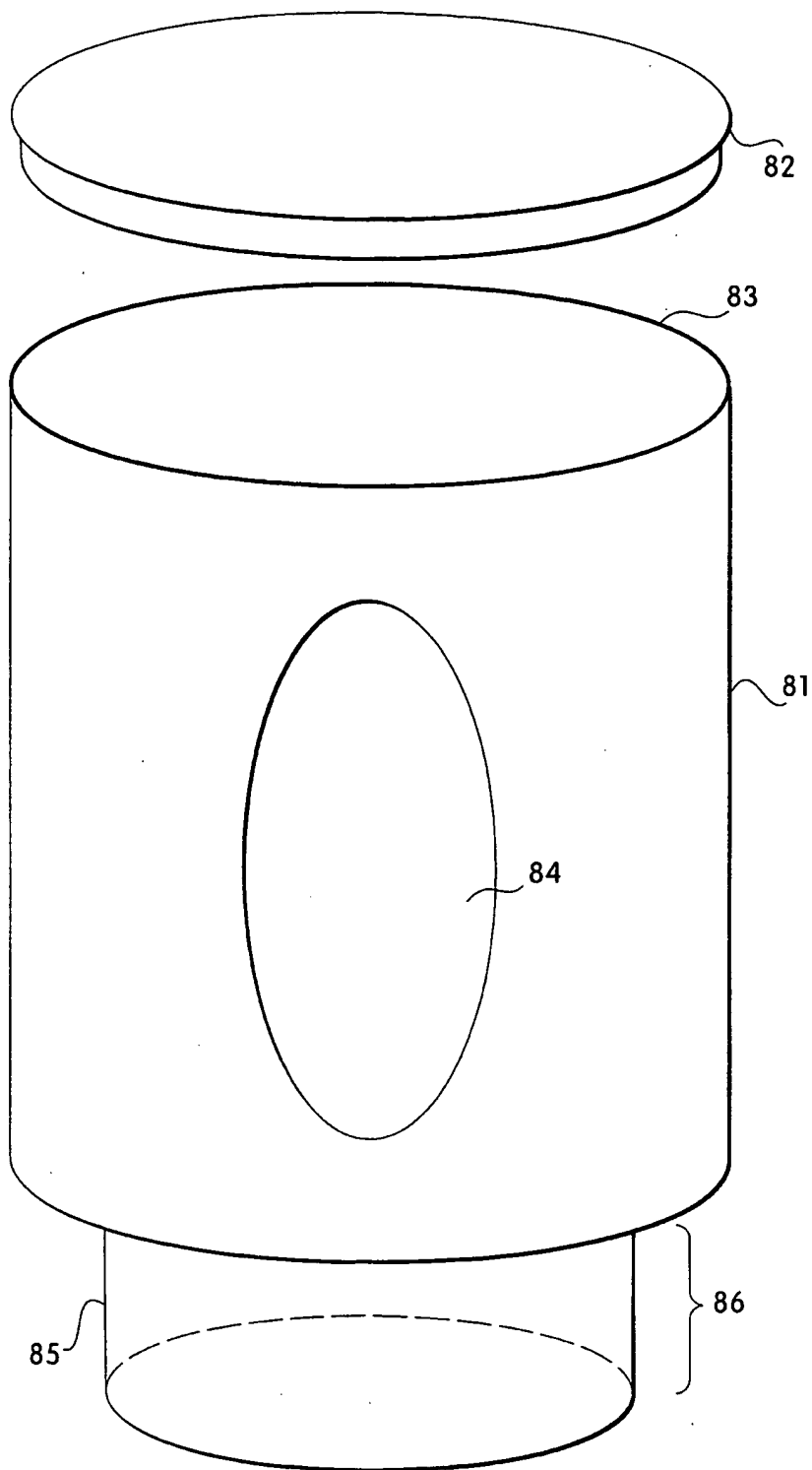


Fig. 8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US98/25946

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) : B65H 1/00; A47K 10/24; B60R 11/00; B60R 7/00

US CL : 221/33, 45, 46; 224/539, 542, 544, 277

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 221/33, 45, 46; 224/539, 542, 544, 277

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 3,700,138 A (Nelson) 24 October 1972 (24.10.72), col. 2, lines 42-64.	1-10, 12-14, 16-21
Y	US 2,953,293 A (Anderson) 20 September 1960 (20.09.60), col. 2, lines 31-32.	11
Y	US 4,180,160 A (Ogawa et al.) 25 December 1979 (25.12.79), col. 2, lines 21-22.	15
A	US 4,967,988 A (Nguyen) 06 November 1990 (06.11.90).	1-21
A	US 5,533,700 A (Porter) 09 July 1996 (09.07.96).	1-21
A	US 3,973,695 A (Ames) 10 August 1976 (10.08.76).	1-21

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

12 FEBRUARY 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

10 MAR 1999

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Box PCT
Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer

WILLIAM E. TERRELL *Diane Smith*

Telephone No. (703) 308-1113

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US98/25946

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4,651,896 A (Niske et al.) 24 March 1987 (24.03.87).	1-21

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)